

Let Them Hear

Lesson Nine • Acts 11:1-18

When God Works in Unexpected Ways

The Salvation of Gentiles

What should have been an occasion for CELEBRATION became a source of CONTENTION in the Jerusalem church.

Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him.
Acts 11:1-2

When God Works in Unexpected Ways

1. The Point of CONTENTION: Jews Fellowshiping with Gentiles Is Unacceptable!

Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him, saying, "You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!" Acts 11:1-3

Contention Turns to Criticism

Jewish believers in the Jerusalem church criticized Peter for STAYING and EATING with Gentiles.

But when Peter arrived back in Jerusalem, the Jewish believers criticized him. "You entered the home of Gentiles and even ate with them!" they said. Acts 11:2-3 NLT

2. The Proof of CHANGE: God Is Saving Gentiles in the Same Way He Is Saving Jews!

But Peter explained it to them in order from beginning to ending... Acts 11:4

Peter's Explanation of God's Work:

- God CONFRONTED Peter's flawed perspective in a vision. vs. 5-10
- God COMMANDED Peter to go to Cornelius' house. vs. 11-12
- God PREPARED Cornelius to hear the Gospel. vs. 13-14
- God POURED OUT the Holy Spirit on them. vs. 15-16

Peter's Question

Will you OPPOSE God's work? Or will you ACCEPT God's work?

"If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?" Acts 11:17

Jewish Believers' Response

They stopped OBJECTING and started GLORIFYING God for granting salvation to all peoples.

When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life." Acts 11:18

Lessons Learned:

- When hearing the unexpected about someone, don't CRITICIZE but seek to understand.
- When criticized for following Jesus, don't DISMISS your critics but be gracious to them.
- When God works in unexpected ways, don't STAND in God's way but accept it and praise God.